

Appl. No. 10/672,831
Amdt. dated June 16, 2005
Reply to Office Action of March 17, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-5, 7-28, 32-39 and 44-46 are pending in this application.

Claims 6, 29-31 and 40-43 have been cancelled by this Amendment.

Claims 32-36 stand allowed and are unchanged by this Amendment.

Claims 4, 5, 10-12, 16-19, 21, 22, 24, 25, 28, 30 and 43 stand objected to, but allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Independent claim 1, which stands rejected, has been amended to recite that the fabric is a woven fabric and that the fabric is modified after the fabric is removed from the papermaking machine and thereafter returned to service.

Claim 4, which was deemed allowable if rewritten in independent form, has been rewritten in independent form by essentially combining the subject matter of claims 1 and 4. It is therefore believed that claim 4 and its dependent claims (5, 7, 8, 9 and 13-26) are allowable.

Claim 10, which was deemed allowable if rewritten in independent form, has been so rewritten. It is therefore believed that claim 10 and its dependent claims (11-12) are allowable.

Independent claim 27 has been amended to recite that the throughdrying fabric is purposefully modified without being removed from the papermaking machine.

Dependent claim 28 has been amended to recite that the throughdrying fabric modification is carried out without halting rotation of the fabric.

Independent claim 37 has been amended to recite that the forming fabric is purposefully modified without removal from the papermaking machine.

Independent claim 39 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of dependent claim 43. Therefore claim 39 and its remaining dependent claims (44-46) should be allowable.

Turning to the specific grounds for rejection, the specification is objected to and claim 38 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112 as being indefinite in regard to the statement that the open form roll sleeve imparts a watermark to the web. More particularly, since the web is directly supported by a fabric, which in turn is supported by the form roll sleeve, it is questioned how

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modification of the form roll sleeve would create a watermark. Watermarks are formed by differential basis weight regions in the web that are created by differential drainage patterns. Areas of the web that correspond to areas where the drainage rate is high tend to have higher basis weights than areas that correspond to lower drainage rates. Even though the web is supported directly by the forming fabric and only indirectly by the open form roll sleeve, the drainage rates through the forming fabric can be influenced by the drainage through the open form roll sleeve that supports the forming fabric. Hence by selectively reducing the drainage rate through the open form roll sleeve, watermarks in the web can be created.

Claims 1-3, 6-9, 13, 14, 23, 26, 27, 29, 31, 37, 39-42 and 44-46 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. 6,120,642 to Lindsay et al., which teaches methods for making high bulk paper products using certain three-dimensional papermaking fabrics.

With respect to claims 1-3, independent claim 1 has been amended to provide that the fabric is removed from the papermaking machine, the web-contacting surface of the fabric is modified, and the fabric is returned to service. While Lindsay et al. teaches many ways of modifying woven fabrics to provide the desired three-dimensional fabric, no reference is made to removal of a fabric from a papermaking machine, modifying the fabric, and returning it to service. Therefore Lindsay et al. does not anticipate amended claims 1-3.

With respect to claims 6-9, 13, 14, 23 and 26, claim 6 has been cancelled and the subject matter of the remaining claims includes the allowable subject matter of claim 4, now written in independent form. Therefore these claims should be allowable.

With respect to claim 27, which is amended to recite that the throughdrying fabric is modified without being removed from the papermaking machine, this claim is not anticipated by the teachings of Lindsay et al. which refer to modifying new or unused fabrics to be used on a papermaking machine.

With respect to claims 29 and 31, these claims have been cancelled.

With respect to claim 37, there is no teaching in Lindsay et al. to anticipate modifying a forming fabric without removing it from the papermaking machine as claimed.

With respect to claims 39-42 and 44-46, independent claim 39 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 43, which has been cancelled. Therefore independent claim 39 and its dependent claims 40-42 and 44-46 should be allowable.

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Claims 1-3, 6, 8, 9, 39, 40, 42 and 45 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. 4,842,905 to Stech, which teaches a tessellated papermaking fabric structure.

With respect to claims 1-3, independent claim 1 has been amended to refer to "woven" fabrics. To the extent Stech discloses repair of damaged fabrics by removal of a fabric from the papermaking machine and replacing the damaged elements with new ones, Stech does not pertain to woven fabrics. Accordingly Stech does not anticipate (or suggest) the subject matter of amended claims 1-3.

With respect to claims 6, 8 and 9, claim 6 has been cancelled and claims 8 and 9 have been amended to depend from allowable claim 4. Therefore claims 8 and 9 should be allowable over Stech.

With respect to claims 39, 40, 42 and 45, independent claim 39 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 43, which has been cancelled. Therefore independent claim 39 and its remaining dependent claims (including claim 45) should be allowable. Claims 40 and 42 have been cancelled.

Claims 1-3, 6, 8, 13-15, 20, 39-42 and 44-46 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. 3,881,987 to Benz, which teaches a method forming apertured webs using a belt-like drainage structure during formation of the web.

With respect to claims 1-3, while Benz discloses methods of making the desired drainage structure, there is no teaching or suggestion of removing a papermaking fabric from the papermaking machine, modifying the web-contacting surface of the fabric and returning the fabric to service as claimed in independent claim 1. Therefore Benz does not anticipate.

With respect to claims 6, 8, 13-15 and 20, claim 6 has been cancelled and claims 8, 13-15 and 20 now depend from independent claim 4, which contains allowable subject matter. Therefore claims 6, 8, 13-15 and 20 should be allowable over Benz.

With respect to claims 39-42 and 44-46, claims 40-42 have been cancelled and independent claim 39 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 43. Therefore claim 39 and its dependent claims 44-46 should also be allowable.

Claims 1-3, 6, 8, 13, 39-41 and 44 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. 3,034,180 to Greiner et al., which discloses a forming wire for making apertured webs by providing cone-shaped protuberances, for example, on the surface of the forming wire.

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With respect to claims 1-3, Greiner et al. does not teach or suggest removing the forming wire from the papermaking machine, modifying the web-contacting surface of the fabric and returning it to service as now claimed in independent claim 1. Therefore Greiner et al. does not anticipate claims 1-3.

With respect to claim 6, this claim has been cancelled.

With respect to claims 8 and 13, these claims now depend from claim 4, which contains allowable subject matter. Therefore claims 8 and 13 should also be allowable.

With respect to claims 39-41 and 44, claim 39 has been amended to incorporate allowable subject matter. Therefore claims 39 and 44 should be allowable. Claims 40 and 41 have been cancelled.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that this application is now in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited.

Please charge any prosecutorial fees which are due to Kimberly-Clark Worldwide, Inc. deposit account number 11-0875.

The undersigned may be reached at: (920) 721-3616.

Respectfully submitted,

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